

ASIFA EAST

ANIMATOR

A NEWSLETTER OF THE ANIMATED ARTS

CUBAN *animation*

ASIFA EAST WILL HOST AN EVENING OF RECENT CUBAN ANIMATION. A SHOWCASE OF THE NEW CLEVER AND VERY ENJOYABLE ANIMATION FROM THE ANIMATORS FROM THIS NORTH AMERICAN ISLAND NATION WITH LIMITED PRODUCTION RESOURCES. THE WORKS OF JUAN PADRON, TULIO RAGGI, MARLON RIVAS, MODESTO GARCIA AND MARIO GARCIA-MONTES WILL BE FEATURED.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22 AT 6:30 PM,
TISCH SCHOOL OF THE ARTS, 721 BROADWAY, ROOM 1057.

TITLES TO BE ANNOUNCED.

ADMISSION IS FREE. HOSTED BY DAVID EHRLICH.

OCTOBER 1992



ASIFA-East would like to congratulate Dick Rauh on his one man show of botanical watercolors and drawings. The exhibition continues to October 31 at the Burnham Library, Main Street (Route 133), Bridgewater, Connecticut.

ASIFA-EAST

The International Animated
Film Society

c/o Linda Simensky
470 West 24th Street, #15A
New York, N.Y. 10011

A PROGRAM OF
THE CULTURAL COUNCIL
FOUNDATION

ASIFA EAST
The International
Animated Film Society
(New York Chapter)
A program of the Cultural Council Foundation

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PROGRAM NOTES

by Bill Lorenzo

FIRST FILMS - June 1992

First films tend to be little gems—some polished, some unpolished. Yet while these are the types of films that collect dust on the backs of our shelves, ultimately they turn out to be interesting and revealing. Imagine showing your earliest single frame experiments to your peers...rather stand naked in the subway? Anyway, once the embarrassment factor subsided, we collected 26 contributions that made for one good show. The evening of animators that got together to view their works was reminiscent of our January awards gathering—all the fun without the competition!

Tony Eastman really exemplified what a "first film" was and dug deep into his personal archives for a group of 4 short silent home-made films (circa '58/'59) featuring Rocky Rat & Clodhopper Kitty. From opening credits to fade out, each was stylistically in line with the graphic look of 1950's commercials and late '50s Terrytoons. Tony's keen eye was at its best in these shorts when in "Movie Maniacs" Rocky Rat & Clodhopper Kitty are greeted by a group of their "fans" including Tom Terrific, Marky Maypo and other "kid" characters of the period.

Flip Johnson's early work "Frankenstein Cries Out" used an old 1960's flipbook of Boris Karloff as the Frankenstein monster for the basic image in the film, then proceeded to break down the process by altering the timing and graphic image in his own inimitable style, which was already clearly evident in this film. (The flipbook was part of a series issued by Topps Chewing Gum during the mid '60s where frame blow-ups from the Universal horror films were fashioned into flipbooks featuring Frankenstein, the Wolfman, the Mummy, the Creature, etc.) (I still have a whole box of these!)

Steve Dovas contributed his early work "I Was Here" and it perfectly exemplified what all first films can ideally offer—boundless energy and the wonder of experimentation. Some filmmakers retain a "solo" or "independent" identity, and as such, their works tend

to crop up in retrospectives and lecture appearances. Still, in animation these screenings are few and far between, and it is always good to see the early works of such popular animators as John Canemaker (Greed), George Griffin (One Man's Laundry), Jane Aaron (A Brand New Day), Bill Plympton (Drawing Lesson #2), John Schnall (A Day in the Life of a Mosquito), David Ehrlich (Metamorphosis) and others. Each gave us a particularly rare example of their work.

Other artists tend to be known for their work in the studio or company setting, and it seems that these animators and directors are less frequently the subject of retrospectives that might include their solo work. To some I know this is all a question of semantics, and these labels have been discussed in these pages before. I'm not looking to add to that forum. But seriously, how often do we get to see the solo/early work of artists like Michael Sporn, Candy Kugel, R.O. Blechman? It was a real treat to see R.O. Blechman's "Abraham & Isaac" and the bold color design in Michael Sporn's "Elementary". Candy Kugel made "In Between America" when she was starting to do "in-betweens" in the business. At first she was intrigued by all the variations of peoples faces she saw on a bus one day and thought she would use in-betweens to transform one face into another. For years known as metamorphic animation, today it is called "morphing". When arriving home she discovered a Steinberg New Yorker cover with the same concept! She then decided to render the film in Steinberg's style as an homage. For many reasons this is a rare film.

Frank and Caroline Mouris contributed "Frank Film", the landmark film that used thousands of images cut from magazines in a cut paper/collage animation style, presented in rapid-fire fashion all the while underscored by the filmmaker's autobiographical narrative. ASIFA-East is very fond of this film—it was the first film to be introduced at our own

INDEPENDENT BULLETIN

By Ray Kosarin

Back to School

A growing and important influence on independent animation are film schools. They have spawned a new, active generation of filmmakers, and have increased both the visibility and diversity of films being produced. With Fall and the beginning of the academic year, this writer spoke to the faculty members at three area schools: NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, Rhode Island School of Design, and School of Visual Arts.

Animation programs in schools are a recent phenomenon. There was no call for them during the studio era. SVA's Don Duga explains, "In the old days, you'd get into a studio and they'd apprentice you and you'd work your way up. They'd usually take people out of art school, but it had nothing to do with animation degrees and stuff. This is kind of a new thing."

With the decline of studio production in the 1960's, work grew scarce and the opportunity for on-the-job training all but vanished. Out of this void grew a need for a new way to learn animation. As a result, art and film schools (themselves a recent development) began to round out their curricula with animation courses. Today, degrees in film and animation are almost the norm for those hoping to enter the business.

"The industry is very competitive," says John Canemaker, head of the animation department at NYU. "You must develop who you are and make sure you want to go into the industry."

As a subject of study, animation in the schools still suffers from something of an identity crisis. Only a handful of schools, such as California Institute of the Arts, The Kubert School in New Jersey, and Sheridan College in Ontario, offer animation degree programs. The majority, however, treat animation as a specialization within another major such as film. Undergraduates at NYU major in Film, although the University does offer at the Master's level a degree in Animation. At RISD, students may major in either Film/Video or in Illustration.

All three schools represented here offer a comprehensive selection of classes in animation history and all aspects of production, including computer animation. RISD's Amy Kravitz says, "What's very important to our program is that the over the course of [the student's] time here, they not only learn to animate and direct individual films; they also learn absolutely all the technical background they need to shoot the films and create soundtracks". RISD also requires that students complete a Freshman Foundation program, a "very rigorous" set of basic art classes in 2D and 3D Design, Life Drawing, and

Art History. NYU offers a full range of courses including Action Analysis, Drawing and Design (a prerequisite for the program), Stop Motion, and Camera Technique.

SVA favors a seminar approach and encourages animation students to take classes in other disciplines. Says Duga, "What you really need is drawing, acting.

You need to understand, because you're dealing with a drawn image, art. You need to know animation history. Those who don't study history are doomed to repeat it." A distinct advantage of learning animation in school is the opportunity for each student to develop as an independent artist.

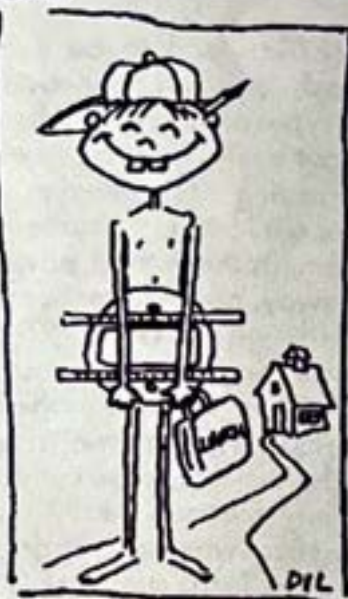
"There are many ways to go in animation," says Canemaker, "and I think they haven't been explored enough...We're not trying to create cookie-cutter animators. We're trying to create individuals who structure animation in their own way."

"What I attempt to do as teacher," says Duga, "is bring out what the student already knows. I try to give them the structure to hang what they already know, a frame to fill it in. If the student is willing, there's nothing I can't teach them."

Says Kravitz, "Whenever I'm advising a project, I always leave it up to [the student] to make the final decision. I can clarify them to the direction, but I'm always careful to specify that it's my direction".

All three institutions require their students to complete at least one film to answer print or film-to-tape transfer. "Even if you never do another film in your life, that experience is valuable", says Duga. "That's why I find people are coming back out of the industry and into school to explore their ideas".

RISD requires that students complete independent projects during both Junior and Senior years. Kravitz explains, "By the time the student gets to Senior year, they have some confidence and expertise...in Junior year it's all right if a roll of film comes back blank from the lab. That's actually good; they get a lot of the hard knocks



learned. By Senior year, they can really start exploring in a mature way the animation art form."

Canemaker notes also the practical benefit of a finished film: "I want them physically to walk away with a film because you need a calling card in the business. You've got to have work that says, 'This is me', that will help them get into their career."

A few studios, such as Disney, actively recruit from schools. In most cases, however, the connection between the schools and the industry remains informal. NYU graduates have received offers based on work screened in the Spring Animation Festival. RISD holds a special screening of Senior projects at the Ottawa Festival.

Breaking into the field is never easy and, at present, the prospects for employment are discouraging.

Says Duga, "These are the best of times and these are the worst of times. People are closing down. Commercials are really way down in New York. A lot of people are just giving up, who've been a long time in the business. But [today] there's a bigger outlet for independent films. You have Terry Thoren out in California, MTV, festivals all over the place—there's more to be seen."

"Animation is now being redone. It's transitional. I tell my students they're the ones that are gonna make it."

Canemaker, too, encourages his students to have "self-confidence in their own abilities and their own talent...I get a lot from students in terms of eagerness and the joy that they have in making their work. Their optimism rubs off on me and helps me a lot."

PROGRAM NOTES

ASIFA-East Animation Awards and then go on to win the 1973 Academy Award for Best Animated Short Film.

John Dilworth's "Pierre" and Suzanne Dimant's "Why" are more recent ASIFA-East Animation Award winners. But several first films were not that well known. Don Duga's "Bust Bag", Irra Duga's "Turtle Soup" and Janet Benn's "Pictures" were greeted with new eyes by the enthusiastic audience. Even my own clay animated "The Message" has not been screened since the 1978 New York Filmmakers Expo, and not at all for an ASIFA audience. Thanks for the warm reception.

Dean Lennert's "Woodspirit", one of the newer films in the program, began to run on PBS/WNYC Channel 31's "First Exposure: Student Films" shortly after this June program. This is a beautifully photographed glimpse of a fabled woodland satyr. Thanks to everyone for contributing to this program. The complete list of contributions are as follows.

Tony Eastman—"Rocky Rat"/"Movie Maniacs"/"Rough House Raccoon"/"Parasite Problems"; Suzanne Dimant—"Why"; Dean Lennert—"Woodspirit"; Steve Dova—"I Was Here"; John Schnoll—"A Day in the Life of a Mosquito"; Margaret Frey—"The Journey of Bangwell Putt"; Michael Zodorozny—"Studiel"; Willy Heartland—"The Viscera" (excerpt); Tom Warburton—"Snake"; Joey Ahlbum—"A Minute of Mystery"; Bill Plympton—"Drawing Lesson #2"; John Dilworth—"Pierre"; Flip Johnson—"Frankenstein Cries Out"; Bill Lorenzo—"The Message"; Candy Kugel—"In Betweening America"; John Canemaker—"Greed"; Michael Sporn—"Elementary"; David Ehrlich—"Metamorphosis"; Jane Aaron—"A Brand New Day"; George Griffin—"One Man's Laundry" (excerpt); Janet Benn—"Pictures"; Frank & Caroline Mouris—"Frank Film"; R.O. Blechman—"Abraham and Isaac"; Don Duga—"Bust Bag"; Irra Duga—"Turtle Soup"; John Hubley—"Wolf Chases Pigs" (the first film he directed)

For Sale:

A vintage 1940's animation desk that was given to owner by a former Disney animator and director 30 years ago.

Write: - Neil A. Grauer

One E. University Parkway, Unit 701
Baltimore, MD 21218

For Sale:

Radius Pivot Monitor for Macintosh computers Black/White & greyscale.

For all Mac's with builtin video port.

\$450. Neg. - Contact:

Vanguard Media (212) 242-5317

EAST COAST I

There are a number of independent animators who are married to each other, and for awhile, I'd like to focus the column on "Independent Animator-couples" in the expectation that such joint interviews will elicit some very interesting and certainly more personal results. As I shall be travelling quite a bit this year, I thought it would be advantageous to interview couples in other parts of the world as well. The column will open, however, with a couple of well-known East Coast Independents, Amy Kravitz and Steve Subotnick, who live and create in Providence, Rhode Island, and who both teach at the Rhode Island School of Design.

DAVID: You're both independent animators and you both teach. How do you balance the two?

AMY: With difficulty. Although I feel these two aspects of my working life can enhance each other they also interfere with each other. Summer is very important because it presents a long stretch of time to focus on artmaking.

DAVID: Are you able to do much in the summer?

AMY: Not this summer, because of the situation with the house. We just bought a house that needs a tremendous amount of work.

DAVID: What about last summer?

AMY: Yes. Last summer we worked intensively. During the year, full-time teaching and a commercial job compromised my personal work.

DAVID: You completed that great MTV piece.

AMY: Thank you. Although I'm proud of the MTV piece I deeply missed not getting more personal work done this year.

DAVID: Don't you think the MTV piece was personal?

AMY: No. It reflected my personal style but it wasn't my personal work. John Payson put absolutely no strictures on me so long as I kept to the approved storyboard, which was my own concept and design. But it's not the same as making a personal film where you can change it at any time and follow any pathway that comes into view while you are working. Another problem I had with the MTV project is that I have real trouble when I know exactly what I am doing. I never storyboard my own work. Consequently I never have the pressure of knowing visually where I have to be going so that every moment can be a real discovery.

DAVID: Steve, how do you balance your personal filmmaking with teaching?

STEVE: Given the fact that you have to make a living, I think teaching is fairly conducive to doing personal work. The only way I have found to do it is to divide time up very clearly into teaching days and personal art days -and to approach each as a separate job.

DAVID: What do you do at the beginning of an "art day" to separate yourself emotionally from what you've just had?

STEVE: The separation generally happens the night before. You come back from teaching at the end of the day and you have the evening to unwind. And then I just get up early the next morning. (This is the ideal - I'm not always this disciplined). I get up early the next morning and have breakfast and coffee and just sit down and begin working. There are certain things that help me to focus depending upon what kind of work I'm doing, like listening to music or having a good cup of coffee next to me.

AMY: Or like not answering the phone.

STEVE: That's extremely important. I turn on the answering machine and turn off the ringer. I think a bigger problem is working in one's home. Because when you're at home, people think you're available.

AMY: People think you're not working when you're at home.

STEVE: They feel free to intrude upon your time. I turn down the volume on the phone and answering machine so that I don't even know people are calling, because if I hear people on the machine, I'm going to be disturbed and I'm going to be wondering what they wanted, and I'll have to call them back and complete the thought. So I just hermetically seal myself off from the world as much as possible and work.

DAVID: When you haven't worked on your film, for four or five days, are you thinking about it consciously during that period?

STEVE: I'm usually fretting. That's the discipline, trying to make a clear separation. Ideally, on days that I'm teaching, for example, I'd be able to focus on teaching, and to have no other thoughts enter my mind. It's not always possible, but that's what I aim for. Conversely, when I'm working on my artwork, my goal is to be able to focus so completely that I don't have any thoughts about what I have to do to prepare for classes next week.

AMY: I can't do that at all. Not at all. Steve and I are very different. He separates his work and his teaching. With me everything melds together. I'll be working on my own work and get an idea for teaching and vice-versa.

DAVID: When you begin teaching again, do you set the stage of the film you will do when you return to it?

STEVE: It depends on the kind of film and where I am in the film. I'm currently working on a narrative film which is fairly well planned-out, so I can try to complete a particular scene by the end of a workday. But I also make other kinds of films. I just completed an abstract computer animated film. The work sessions for this film had no roadmaps other than the internal ones given to me by the materials.

DAVID: What about commercial work?

STEVE: Ideally I'd like to be able to make a living from teaching and from commercial work and from artwork without being totally dependent on any one of them. I think that's a healthy way of approaching it because you don't become anyone's servant, economically. But from all the ways I've had to earn a living, I've enjoyed teaching the most.

David
Par

NDEPENDENTS

by
Ehrlich
at Nine

AMY: It's a tremendous amount of fun and there's a tremendous amount of freedom involved. At least at RISD there is. It's a wonderful place to teach.

DAVID: Do you want the same economic flexibility that Steve talks about?

AMY: I would do any kind of work that I think would be interesting, that I would grow from, and that I would find challenging. I don't do very much commercial work because not very much comes my way and I don't go out looking for it. There's something to learn from all those different pursuits. Look at these artists from the past. Peter Paul Rubens was also a diplomat. Charles Ives sold insurance until his fifties. I don't have any agenda, one way or another. It would depend upon which projects seemed interesting.

DAVID: You're pregnant, aren't you Amy? How many months?

AMY: Five months.

DAVID: Do you feel more light-headed or more mystical, as artists sometime report during pregnancy?

AMY: No, I feel nauseated, whale-esque, and very grouchy. The parts that are unbelievable are having a window into that world through ultra-sound or the special stethoscope that has a speaker so you can hear the baby's heart beating.

DAVID: Does the experience give you some ideas or impetus for films?

AMY: Being pregnant the last few months has coincided with renovating our house which is not a situation that inspires great poetry—removing soil pipes and bathing in a cement mixing tub. My work-in-progress does have eggs in it, though.

DAVID: Steve, what do think of the stereotype of the father getting into nest-building.

STEVE: The father-character in my film does live in a nest.

DAVID: Is your artwork effected by all this?

STEVE: I don't know yet. We've talked about it. I've wondered when I get back to my film, if I'll have different feelings about it, being a parent.

AMY: One thing that is already different is a different sense of responsibility. When I have a moment of weakness now I feel I must call up strength not only for myself, but for the child. That part is like filmmaking and you know that for some spiritual reason you have to complete the film.

DAVID: Have you both looked ahead to how you would balance the three things—personal work, teaching and the child?

STEVE: We talk about that a lot, because it's already extremely tight just between working and trying to make artwork—and taking care of the cat. The idea of now having the responsibility of taking care of a child is certainly going to put more pressure in terms of time. We were at a festival at Cardiff and listening to a panel of women animators. Amy asked them if any of them were mothers, and if so, what effect it had on their artwork. Suzan Pitt and Nina Schorina, both mothers, said that it was in many ways,

enriching to their artmaking. So even though it may be more of a problem in terms of making time for everything, we're both hopeful that this kind of enrichment will flow into all parts of our lives, including our artwork.

AMY: We took in a stray cat this year. She's a lot of work but she provides such pleasure just to watch her and to be with her, that I think there's a kind of spiritual dimension—as if she filled a little place inside that was empty. Nurturing is a door waiting to be opened that reveals a whole new part of us—new rooms that you never knew were there in the house you were living in. I think that can't help but influence one's art. I think it will be very tough, and we're worried, but I also think it will be very worthwhile.

DAVID: As you both are artists using the home as a studio, does that reinforce the creativity of both of you?

STEVE: I think for the most part its mutually reinforcing. Amy and I are both very respectful of each other's work, and I think we're both fairly thoughtful about giving each other both the support and space we need to do the work. The only way it becomes a problem is that we enjoy being together. We take a coffee break together and it stretches into an hour.

AMY: There's one other difference too which is that we're very very compatible in almost every way except one, which is that we have completely different circadian rhythms. Steve is a lark and I am a night owl. He can wake up early and work and sometimes I get my best hours when he's gone to sleep and I'm working through the night. I think so long as we both have our privacy, which we both realize that we need, it seems to work out very well. The other thing is that animation is a very particular and peculiar endeavor. I actually cannot imagine living with someone who didn't understand the peculiarities. The other thing we can do as a couple is we can help each other. When Steve is shooting we help each other get all our materials ready, we go over the check list, we can look at film when it comes back. We have someone we can always consult with, technically, artistically. That's a very big advantage.

DAVID: Do you critique each other's work during the process?

STEVE: Yes. But we do that only by request.

AMY: Very carefully.

STEVE: Right.

AMY: I feel in terms of my own personal work that there is a kind of gestation period in which you really can't show it to anyone. The work is too vulnerable, too fragile. It must hatch first. Then it can be at a stage where criticism is useful. But that's usually later, and if you're living together, you will have to be respectful during that vulnerable period.

DAVID: Is it hard during that period not to show it to him or talk about the work?

continued on Page 7

Program For Art on Film Announces Newsletter on Media and the Visual Arts

The Program for Art on Film, a joint venture of The Metropolitan Museum of Art and the J. Paul Getty Trust, announced publication of Art on Screen; a newsletter about film and video on the visual arts. Directed to professionals in the fields of art, education and media, Art on Screen will be published three times a year (spring, fall and winter), beginning with the Spring 1992 issue. It is the first American periodical to focus exclusively on the intersecting fields of media and the arts. The Program for Art on Film also announced the publication of Art on Screen, a selective guide to over 900 films and videotapes about the visual arts.

Art on Screen is available from G.K. Hall & Co., publishers, for \$35 paperback and \$65 clothbound. To order, call or write: G.K. Hall & Co., Order Department, Front Street, Box 500, Riverside, NJ 08075-7500. Telephone: 1-800-257-5755.

Optical Toys, a company owned and operated by Andy Voda of Putney, Vermont, is producing a special new 19th century phenakistoscope set featuring the animated artwork of 20th century American independent animators. The animators in the group include: Karen Aqua, David Ehrlich, George Griffin, Flip Johnson, and Amy Kravitz, all of ASIFA-East, and Chel White from ASIFA Northwest. The set will be presented for public sale at this year's Ottawa Animation Festival and eventually at museum and specialty shops throughout North America.

Animation Magazine is back with a new team celebrating its six year anniversary. Animation Magazine, an international guide to the animation industry, is celebrating its six year anniversary. It is the only periodical in the world directed toward both animation professionals and fans of the art. Animation Magazine offers news of the industry, reviews, festival listing, interviews and many other features of interest. Terry Thoren, the original publisher of Animation Magazine, has purchased it back from VSD Publications and plans to return the magazine to its once proud stature.

Animation Magazine is a quarterly publication. The cost to buy a one year subscription is \$15 for U.S. subscribers, \$20 for Canadian subscribers and \$25 for Foreign subscribers.

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EAST COAST INDEPENDENTS

AMY: No, if I can show it to anyone, I can show it to Steve. But we both learned that there are certain points at which we shouldn't interfere with each others' work.

STEVE: One thing I've learned through this is that it's even important at certain points not to ask anyone to look at your work (at least my work). Because even asking someone for an opinion can be destructive, even if you're ready for it. It's almost like you have to give yourself rules and say, "During this time, no one, not even Amy, will see these drawings." Even though she'd be very supportive.

AMY: When I went off to Cal Arts, work had been good, but life had been terrible. I was determined to just work, and who should I meet within ten days of arriving in school, but Steve. And I had never met anyone that I felt so comfortable with, with whom I felt not only a personal affinity, but who understood what I was doing in terms of work. And I understood what he was doing in terms of work. You're always surprised by things, and you say, "Oh, here's what I was looking for, right in front of me." I think it's since I met Steve that I actually did get work out. I had been just treading water for a very long time, and I felt that when I moved to California for awhile and when I went to Cal Arts and met Steve, I really began to swim. Members of my family felt you either work or you have a life. I can't make that distinction. I think you can have all those things.

DAVID: Well, you seem both to have everything now.

STEVE: We don't have a bathroom.

AMY: That's true, David!

DAVID: Think I'll end on that one.

John Canemaker traveled to beautiful Urbino, Italy as the guest of "Teaching Animation", an International Symposium sponsored by ASIFA ITALIA September 10 - 12. The Symposium, composed of animation experts from around the world (including Bretislav Pojar, Bob Godfrey, Glenn Keane, Raoul Servais, Dan McLaughlin, among others), focuses on sharing information about issues relevant to training and teaching within public and/or privately owned structures, cinema schools and art institutes.

Canemaker, head of New York University Tisch School of the Arts' Animation Program was invited to discuss NYU's teaching methods and structure, and to participate in a panel discussion regarding the teaching on animation history. He was also asked to deliver a lecture/screening for the general public on the origins of "personality" animation in the work of Winsor McCay and Otto Messmer.



The Walter Reade Theater of The Film Society of Lincoln Center presented four animated films by New York based producer/director Michael Sporn as part of Movies for Kids Programs. "The Little Match Girl", "The Red Shoes", "Abel's Island", and "The Story of the Dancing Frog" were the four films chosen for the September program.

Spike & Mike's Festival of Animation 1992

starts Wednesday, September 16th for a limited engagement at the Cinema Village Theater, 100 3rd Ave. between 12th and 13th streets. 212-505-7320

(Call or check listing for showtimes).

The collection features the most recent Academy Award Winner in the Best Animation Short Film category, Daniel Greave's "Manipulation".



ASIFA-East would like to congratulate Bill Plympton and wish his new animated feature film, "The Tune", much success. Look for "The Tune" at a theater near you.

Virginia Museum of Fine Arts
Nights for New Film & Video
An Animated Evening: Selected Shorts
Presented by animator Janet Scagnelli

On October 15, Janet Scagnelli will present a selection of recent short films by leading animators as part of the Virginia Museum's "Nights For New Film & Video" series intended to demonstrate the wide range of style and content involved in this lesser known area of film.

ASIFA-Hollywood has returned. The West Coast chapter is publishing "Inbetweener" an informative newsletter and looks forward to continuing the "Annie Awards". Become a part of ASIFA-Hollywood: D.F. Crane, Editor
P.O. Box 787
Burbank, CA 91503
Telephone/Fax #: 818-842-8330

Animated films included with
1992 New York Film Festival:
"Perpetual Motion",
(US, 1992, 5 min.)
directed by Karen Aqua
&
"Milk of Amnesia",
(US, 1992, 5 min.)
directed by Jeffrey Noyes Scher

Hiroshima International by

The Japanese are exceptionally well-organized. The final week of August, two Yakuza heavies completed a hit on a crusading reporter, then gave themselves up to the police, bowed, and handed over an official Yakuza document that attested to the fact that they were, in fact, no longer a part of the Yakuza family. Well-organized and gracious.

The Hiroshima Festival was perfect in almost every respect. Screenings, parties, trips and meetings were plotted out and choreographed down to the precise minute so that one felt oneself to be a participant in a vast, continuously running live network TV show. All requests were answered with warm smiles and immediate, effective action. I've never seen 16mm film and video look so good before, and the sound system, although a bit off the first evening, was corrected and just perfect for the rest of the week. Festival Directrice, Sayoko Kinoshita, who seemed to be everywhere at once, has made this one of the finest events on the festival circuit.

The film selection was uniformly excellent. With over 650 films and videos from which to choose 66 works for competition and 21 for Panorama, I can imagine that many fine films fell through the cracks, but the Selection Committee, chaired by Polish director, Jerzy Kucia, with Pittsburgh animator, Paul Glablicki, ASIFA Vice-President, Pat Webb, computer animator, Toshi Kawahara, and film critic, Kosei Ono (the latter two from Tokyo), chose 87 works that showed the breadth of animation being done today, from the fine, sensitive handiwork of Caroline Leaf's "Two Sisters" to the shiny computer spots done in the U.S. and Japan. British animation dominated the Competition, with over one-fourth of the films shown, and 6 of the 19 prizes awarded, including two of the most coveted cash awards: the Grand Prize, given to Paul Berry for "Sandman", and the Debut Prize given to Petra Freeman for "The Mill", which was a series of gently-done reminiscences



of her father. Final projects at London's Royal Academy of Art, funded in part by the British Film Institute, continued the clean sweep of the Debut Prizes of Category B with Ken Lidster's "Balloon" and Philip Hunt's "Spotless Dominoes", and a Special Jury Prize going to Tim Rolt for "The Vacuum".

With the exception of Freeman's work, the influence of the Quay Brothers was evident in all these student films, with the archetypal "bogeyman" central to both the narrative and the surrealistic atmosphere.

But the Jury, chaired by French symbolist director, Jean-Francois Laguionie, with Estonian director, Rein Raamar, German-Swiss festival director, Otto Alder, NFB administrator, Helene Tanguay, and Japanese director, Tadahito Mochinaga, proved equally appreciative of films of sheer visual poetry, awarding the two prizes of Category E (shorter than 5 minutes) to two of the directors of the GDS studio in Carouge, Switzerland. First prize was won by Claude Luyet for "The Square of Light", a depiction in vibrant color slashes of a boxing match from the point of view of the boxer. Second Prize went to Georges Schwizgebel for "The Ride to the Abyss", a series of six-second scenes in painterly animation that are shown, in the finale, to have been sequentially rotated under the camera. Georges openly admitted his gratitude to George Griffin for first introducing this structure in "Viewmaster", which Georges had seen in 1982.

Animation Festival

David Ehrlich

Another prize-winner was Piotr Dumala's major work, "Franz Kafka", done in his unique technique of continually etching through a layer of black paint to the white plaster beneath. In his latest work, the interplay of light through various levels of depth recalls the paintings and etchings of Rembrandt and Redon. "Kafka" was rejected for a prize at Stuttgart, awarded the Grand Prize at Zagreb, and now gained its Category prize.

Two films that did not gain prizes deserve special mention. In "Culture Historical Maneuver in the Night" is Hungarian director, Zoltan Szilagyi's heartfelt suffering for the war in Yugoslavia. The dismantling of the Trojan Horse (Yugoslavia), and the death and destruction that ensue, are poignant reminders of what the west has not done to stop that suffering. "The Water People", by Paul Driessen, was commissioned by NHK in Tokyo, so that for the first time, Driessen could take advantage of all the things money can buy: inkers, painters, character designers. At 26 minutes, this film is a masterpiece of quirky characterization with a narrative that may be accessible to a general audience.

The only American prize went to Barry David Cook for his "Off His Rockers" a sentimental computer animation of a young boy obsessed with playing high-tech video war games, to the consternation of his old rocking horse. The film won a Special Jury Prize.

Other American films in Competition were David Byrne's music video, "She's Mad", by Carlos Arguello, a Reebok spot by Dan Quarnstrom, a Lexus spot by Clark Anderson, a Listerine spot by John Lasseter, an Experimental animation, "Primordial Dance", by Cambridge animator, Karl Sims, "The Potato Hunter" by Tim Hittle, "Flower Planet" by Mark Kirkland, an MTV segment from the Storyboard Competition, "Feel", by Lauren McMullen, and "Diabolic Wife" by Simi Nallaseth. The latter elicited a lot of discussion by the Japanese computer specialists about the potentials in their medium for unique (weird) characterizations.

The ASIFA Executive Board held its meetings

at Hiroshima and awarded its annual ASIFA prize to Nicole Salomon for her lifetime of work as ASIFA Secretary-General, as the leader of childrens' workshops around the world, and as friend and supporter of animators. She was also made Honorary Secretary-General.

Several important decisions were made at the meetings, which I'd now like to report to our American members. Firstly, Philippe Moins, the Belgian publisher of ASIFA News, is to publish a final issue in September, after which the journal will be published in Prague under the editorship of Ladislav Ulver, the Czech critic and theorist of film who has been directing a fine Czech journal of film. This move should encourage a greater focus upon the changes in Russia and east Europe, and, because the journal will double in size, from 16 to 32 pages (for roughly the same cost!) more space can be devoted to in-depth articles on animation.

The individual members from Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have recently formed a single supra-national ASIFA group called Nordic-ASIFA, with Gunnar Strom of Norway as its President. At a time that so many countries are being fragmented by ethnic and religious conflicts, it is heartening to see an integrative impulse at work. Those of you who are historians may realize that this particular geographical configuration roughly corresponds to the old Hanseatic League.

The ASIFA Archive, directed in Berlin by Kurt Weiler, is cooperating with a college in Babelsberg, Germany, to transfer all our holdings to videotape. The college will subsidize all transfers to VHS as well as the mailings of tapes to ASIFA members for educational study and screenings. This solves the problem of the loan and subsequent deterioration of the film prints, which will now remain in the Archive as preserved materials. The first transfers will be to PAL, but NTSC conversions will follow soon, new catalogues will be printed and sent to all groups, and members may borrow tapes within the structure yet to be designed. ⑩